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# The *Heart* of the European *Body Politic*. British and German Perspectives on Europe's Central *Organ*

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On the basis of a corpus of British and German press coverage of European Union (EU) politics over the 1990s, the paper analyses uses of the geopolitical HEART metaphor. Over the course of the 1990s, successive British governments promised to work *at the heart of Europe*. However, no one ever claimed that Britain was *in the heart of Europe*, even though other geographically peripheral parts of Europe (e.g. the Balkan peninsula) have been situated there by the British press. Instead, British media and politicians tended to foreground scenarios of HEART ILLNESS or even HEART FAILURE to express scepticism towards further political and economic integration. Conversely, in German public discourse, the HEART OF EUROPE seems to be most often proudly identified as a German one, with selected places in central Europe (Prague, Vienna, Wrocław/Breslau) as 'runners-up'. On the basis of the corpus evidence, it is argued that the HEART OF EUROPE metaphor plays a central role in EU-related political discourse, which links it to the tradition of BODY POLITIC concepts.

**Keywords:** body politic, corpus, discourse, enlargement, Euro-scepticism, heart of Europe

## **body Metaphors in Political Discourse**

The human body has been a source for metaphors denoting social and political entities in Western culture since antiquity, and the heart, as one of its essential organs has occupied a particularly prominent status in political imagery. To give but one example, the medieval political philosopher and bishop, John of Salisbury (c. 1120–1180), assigned 'the place of the heart, from which proceeds the origin of good and bad works' to the senate, i.e. the council of a state, in his treatise *Policraticus* (quoted in translation after Bass, 1997: 206; for the original Latin passage cf. John of Salisbury 1965, Vol. I: 283). The heart is seen in this case as the seat of moral and ethical responsibility, whilst the most powerful position is accorded to the *head*, i.e. the prince, who 'is subject only to God and to those who exercise His office and represent Him on Earth, even as in the human body the head is given life and is governed by the soul' (cf. Bass, 1997: 206–207; cf. also John of Salisbury 1965, Vol. I: 282–283 and Struve, 1984). When applied to political topics, the concepts of the HEAD and the HEART belong in the tradition of BODY POLITIC theories, which, as David Hale (1971) has shown, can be traced back to antiquity and which dominated political thinking in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance up to and including Thomas Hobbes's famous image of the state as 'an Artificiall Man; though of greater stature and strength than the Naturall, for whose protection and

defence it was intended' (Hobbes, 1996: 9). In one strand of this tradition the 'STATE = BODY' analogy was focused on the personal body of the ruler, as epitomised in the theory of the *King's two bodies*, analysed in detail by Ernst Kantorowicz (1957). In this tradition, based on early Christian theology, the ruler was seen, for instance in the words of the renaissance lawyer Edmund Plowden, as having 'in him' both a 'Body natural [...], subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature or Accident' and a 'Body politic' that 'cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the People, and the Management of the public weal' (Kantorowicz, 1957: 7). This analogy between the concrete, natural body of an individual person and the abstract political and legal powers he holds does not gloss over but rather highlights the differences between the two categorial levels. The main point of the *two-body* theory was to enable legal and political theorists to distinguish between the mortal and potentially deficient body of a person who just happened to be the ruler on the one hand and the immortal and divinely legitimised system of authority, justice and dynasty, on the other hand (Kantorowicz, 1957: 7–23). By contrast, the emphasis in the more general mapping 'THE WHOLE OF STATE IS A (HUMAN) BODY' lay on explaining the specific functions of the parts of the political entity by likening them to the parts and organs of the body; hence the proliferation of detailed comparisons, similes and metaphors associating an ORGAN IN THE BODY (as understood in medieval and renaissance physiology) and its symptoms of HEALTH or ILLNESS with a specific part of the STATE and its conditions of functioning. Hobbes, for instance, devoted a whole chapter of the *Leviathan* to the 'Infirmities' and 'Diseases' of the 'Common-Wealth', ranging from 'Defectuous Procreation' over 'Poysoning' to 'Expiring', i.e. 'Dissolution' (Hobbes, 1996: 221–230).

John of Salisbury's above-quoted conceptualisation of the 'princeps' as the *head* of the *body politic* is still reflected today in terms such as *head of state* or *head of government*, which have passed into modern general vocabulary concerning political, social and legal affairs (Deignan, 1995: 2). The concept of the HEART has also survived as a source concept for many idioms in modern English as well as German (cf. Deignan, 1995: 7–10, *Brewer's Dictionary*, 2001: 557–558; Röhrich, 2001, Vol. II: 704–708), but it seems not to be associated closely with the sphere of politics. However, corpus-based studies of metaphors in British and German coverage of European Union (EU) politics during the 1990s reveal that the most frequently and prominently used source concept from the field of BODY concepts referring to the geopolitical entity 'Europe' is that of the HEART. This was the result of the analysis of a manually assembled pilot corpus, called EUROMETA I, which included some 2100 passages from 28 British and German newspapers from the period 1989–2001 (cf. Musolff, 2000). This finding has been corroborated in a subsequent study of a larger corpus, called EUROMETA II, for the same period (cf. Musolff, 2004). This second corpus, which comprises some 19,000 passages, was compiled from two general, computer-based corpora, i.e. the 'Bank of English' at the University of Birmingham and 'COSMAS' at the Institute for German Language in Mannheim. In the pilot corpus, 37 out of 73 instances of LIFE-BODY-HEALTH imagery mention the *heart of Europe*; and occurrences of other parts of the European *body politic* are only in single figures. In the second corpus the

prominence of the HEART metaphor is even more pronounced. It accounts for 545 tokens (i.e. 45%) of the altogether 1189 LIFE-BODY-HEALTH related metaphor tokens in EUROMETA II, with 336 tokens in the German sample and 209 in the English sample (cf. Tables 1 and 2; for analyses of the whole domain cf. Musolff, 2000: 140–153 and 2003).

## HEART Metaphors in the EUROMETA Corpora

The HEART OF EUROPE metaphors are usually linked to two main conceptual scenarios (for the category of ‘scenarios’ as cognitive structures embodying knowledge of AGENT-ACTION-PATIENT relations cf. Lakoff, 1987: 285–286 and Musolff, 2004: 16–29): (1) an understanding of the HEART as a spatially and functionally CENTRAL PART of the BODY, and (2) the notion of the HEART as a LIVING ORGAN or ORGANISM that can suffer damage from injury or disease. The CENTRALITY aspect of the HEART concept is evident in references to countries, regions or cities as being situated geographically at the *heart of Europe*. These are statistically by far the most frequent uses in the EUROMETA II German sample (with 257 out of 336 tokens), and still make up a sizeable portion in the English sample (34 out of 209). Nearly half (i.e. 116) of the 252 German tokens relate to Germany or to specific German regions and cities as being the *heart of Europe* (‘das Herz Europas’) or as being *in the heart of Europe* (‘im Herzen Europas’):

(1) [E. Teufel, minister president of the state Baden-Württemberg]: Wir sind ein Land am Rande der Bundesrepublik, aber wir sind ein Land im Herzen Europas und deswegen glaube ich, daß wir unsere ganze Politik auch europäisch ausrichten sollten. (*Mannheimer Morgen*, 28 June 1991)

Our state is a border region of the Federal Republic but it lies in the heart of Europe; therefore I think that we also have to orientate all our policies towards Europe. (English translation for this and all other German quotations: AM)

(2) Mit der Kürzung der finanziellen Mittel schadet sich die Bundesregierung letztendlich selbst, wenn sie ihre Hauptstadt nicht so ausstattet, daß sie als Hauptstadt im Herzen Europas ihre ganz besondere Rolle auch wahrnehmen kann. (*die tageszeitung*, 6 December 1994)

By cutting the financial support [for Berlin], the Federal government shoots itself in the foot, if it does not provide its capital city with the means to fulfil its very special role as a capital in the heart of Europe.

(3) Milosevics Entscheidung, sich an Deutschland zu wenden, ist eine weitere Bestätigung für die wachsende Macht dieses Landes im Herzen Europas. (*Die Zeit*, 24 June 1999)

Milosevic’s decision to appeal to Germany again underlines the growing power of this country in the heart of Europe.

These examples show that *being in the heart of Europe* is seen as an attractive and highly praiseworthy position from a German perspective. German media and politicians are proud that their country, its regions and cities are *in the*

**Table 1** Conceptual elements of the LIFE–BODY–HEALTH domain in EUROMETA II

Source concepts	English lexemes	German lexemes
LIFE-SURVIVAL	<i>life, alive, live, survival</i>	<i>Leben, leben, lebendig, über-, weiterleben, ins Leben rufen</i>
BIRTH-BABY	<i>birth, rebirth, born, still-born, premature birth, abortion, baptism, baby, (bouncing) child</i>	<i>Geburt, geboren, Wiedergeburt, Frühgeburt, Missgeburt, Kind, Baby</i>
DEATH	<i>death sentence/warrant/knell</i>	<i>Tod, tot</i>
ILLNESS/DISEASE		
I/D: SICK/ILL	<i>Ill, illness, sick (sick man of Europe)</i>	<i>krank, kranker Mann Europas, kränkelnd</i>
I/D: EUROSCLEROSIS	<i>Euro(-)sclerosis</i>	<i>Eurosklerose</i>
I/D: MADNESS	<i>(Euro-)madness</i>	
I/D: INFLUENZA	<i>Asian (economic) flu</i>	<i>Grippe</i>
I/D: VIRUS	<i>virus</i>	
I/D: COLIC	<i>colic</i>	
I/D: WOUND		<i>Wunde, Narbe</i>
I/D: WASTING/TBC		<i>Schwindsucht</i>
I/D: HURT		<i>wehtun</i>
CURE/THERAPY/CARE	<i>therapy, diagnose</i>	<i>Pflege, pflegen, Nachsorge</i>
HEALTH/FITNESS/RECOVERY	<i>recovery, health, healthy</i>	<i>Gesundheit, gesund, gesünder, gesunden (v.), Fit, Fitness, Erholen</i>
BODY PARTS		
BP: HEART	<i>heart</i>	<i>Herz</i>
BP: EYES		<i>Augen</i>
BP: HEAD		<i>Kopf</i>
BP: LEGS		<i>Beine</i>
BP: FEET		<i>Füße</i>
BP: MUSCLES		<i>Muskeln</i>
BP: BOTTOM	<i>backside</i>	

\*Not including lexicalised imagery for political leaders as *heads of state/government*.

**Table 2** Frequencies of tokens for conceptual elements of LIFE–BODY–HEALTH source concepts in EUROMETA II

<i>Source concepts</i>	<i>Number of tokens in English sample</i>	<i>Subtotals</i>	<i>Number of tokens in German sample</i>	<i>Subtotals</i>	<i>Overall number of tokens</i>
BODY PARTS	210		377		587
BP: HEART		209		336	
BP: EYES				19	
BP: HEAD				9	
BP: LEGS				6	
BP: FEET				5	
BP: MUSCLES				2	
BP: BACKSIDE		1			
ILLNESS/DISEASE	60		137		197
I/D: SICK/ILL		40		92	
I/D: EUROSCLEROSIS		12		32	
I/D: MADNESS		4			
I/D: INFLUENZA		2		3	
I/D: VIRUS		1			
I/D: COLIC		1			
I/D: WOUND				5	
I/D: WASTING/TBC				3	

Table 2 (Continued)

<i>Source concepts</i>	<i>Number of tokens in English sample</i>	<i>Subtotals</i>	<i>Number of tokens in German sample</i>	<i>Subtotals</i>	<i>Overall number of tokens</i>
H/I: HURT				2	
BIRTH-BABY	58		100		158
HEALTH/FITNESS/ RECOVERY	37		111		148
LIFE-SURVIVAL	23		55		78
DEATH	4		8		12
CURE/THERAPY/CARE	2		7		9
TOTAL (number of tokens)	394		795		1189

The 2:1 difference in absolute numbers of German and British sample tokens cannot be taken as evidence of greater general popularity of LIFE–BODY–HEALTH metaphors in the German press compared with British press. It is most probably due to the fact that the German sample contains many more texts for the same period (1989–2001) than the Bank of English, which is the result of different sampling decisions when the two source corpora were designed. Overall, COSMAS (1500+ million word forms) is more than three times larger than the Bank of English (450+ million), for details cf. the relevant Internet URLs [www.ids-mannheim.de/kt/corpora.shtml/](http://www.ids-mannheim.de/kt/corpora.shtml/) and [www.cobuild.collins.co.uk/boe\\_info.html](http://www.cobuild.collins.co.uk/boe_info.html).

*heart of Europe*. Significantly, there are no similar references to Britain in either the German or the British sample. One might interpret this simply as a reflection of geographic realities; however a closer look at both samples shows that geography does not determine the allocation of *heart-of-Europe* status completely. The 136 *heart-of-Europe* references to non-German places in the German sample do not just comprise those countries that are usually classified geographically as being in central Europe (e.g. Austria, the Czech and Slovak Republics and Poland) but also include Belgium, Franco-German border regions and Switzerland:

- (4) Die Krise in Belgien, im Herzen Europas (*Die Zeit*, 29 November 1996)

The crisis in Belgium, in the heart of Europe

- (5) Initiative (...) unter dem Titel 'Für unsere Zukunft im Herzen Europas' (...) in der deutschsprachigen Schweiz (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 30 September 1993)

the initiative 'For a future in the heart of Europe' in German-speaking Switzerland

- (6) [Elsaß], das kleine Land im Herzen Europas (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 21 January 1998)

Alsace, the little region in the heart of Europe

In 2000, the *heart of Europe* was even viewed in the German press (quoting the Danish minister for trade and industry) as *moving northwards*, on account of the planned completion of the bridge linking Jutland with the rest of Denmark:

- (7) Am 1. Juli 2000, sagt Dänemarks Ministerin für Industrie und Handel, "rückt das Herz Europas nach Norden". (*Berliner Zeitung*, 18 October 1999)

On 1 July 2000, Europe's heart will move to the North, says Denmark's minister for trade and industry.

In the British sample, it is only a minority of HEART OF EUROPE tokens that relate to a geographically central place or nation, i.e. 14 tokens altogether (six of which relate specifically to Berlin or Germany). In addition, 16 tokens mention the disintegrating state of Yugoslavia as being in the *heart of Europe*, albeit in a politically ambivalent sense. In both the British and the (23) German examples, the reference is to the 1990s wars in the former Yugoslavia as taking place *in the heart of Europe*, with the implication that what happens *in the heart* is (or at least, should be) close to, and of particular importance for the rest of the continent:

- (8) Von 1991 bis 1995 wurde im Herzen Europas ein Krieg geführt, dessen Brutalität und Menschenverachtung wir der Vergangenheit angehörig glaubten. (*Die Zeit*, 18 February 1999)

Between 1991 and 1995, a war was fought in the heart of Europe, with a brutality and inhumanity which we had thought belonged in the past.



(9) So ist also der 'gerechte Krieg' des Atlantikpakts gegen die ethnische Säuberung im Herzen Europas [= Kosovo] im nachhinein gerechtfertigt. (*Berliner Zeitung*, 10 June 1999)

Thus, the 'just war' campaign by NATO against ethnic cleansing in the heart of Europe has been legitimised retrospectively.

(10) Sir: I am glad to note, from your correspondence columns, that I am not alone in feeling shame and outrage at what is happening in Bosnia; (...) When are our so-called statesmen going to recognise a mortal danger, here in the heart of Europe, staring them in the face? (letter to the editor, *The Independent*, 20 July 1995)

(11) Headlines about this war [in Kosovo] being in the 'heart of Europe' (April 3) and other similar comments (...) have the implication that if this was happening thousands of miles away it would be more explicable and almost normal. (letter to the editor, *The Guardian*, 5 April 1999)

The evaluative uses of the phrase *Herz Europas/heart of Europe* in all these examples, and in particular the critical thematisation of its connotations in example (11), leave no doubt that *being in the heart of Europe* is considered to be something special that matters to the other Europeans more than what happens outside. Even when viewed critically (e.g. as a case of double standards, as in example (11), the status of BELONGING TO THE HEART OF EUROPE is assumed to confer certain ethical rights and obligations on the holder as well as attracting the due attention of all other Europeans.

This emotive dimension of positioning nations or regions *in the heart of Europe* is also discernible in references to candidate states for the EU enlargement process, such as the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary – they are seen as not just belonging geographically *in the heart of Europe*, but as having special rights to it, in terms of their culture and history as well as on account of their political and economic disadvantages they suffered during the era of the Cold War:

(12) Die Grenzregionen Oberlausitz, Niederschlesien und Nordböhmen gründeten das Projekt 'Euro-Region Neiße'. (...) Jiri Drda als tschechischer Präsident der Euro-Region zweifelt nicht daran, daß eine grenzüberschreitende, wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit 'schon bald' helfen kann, die ein Menschenalter lang benachteiligte Region wieder ins Herz Europas zu rücken. (*die tageszeitung*, 16 June 1992)

The border regions of the Oberlausitz, Lower Silesia and Northern Bohemia have founded the project 'Euro-region Neiße'. (...) The Czech president of this Euro-region, Jiri Drda, has no doubts that cross-border economic co-operation 'will soon help' to bring this region which has suffered neglect for a whole generation, back into the heart of Europe.

(13) "Prag, Warschau und Budapest gehören zum Herzen Europas", sagte er [= Eberhard Diepgen, Lord Mayor of Berlin]. (*die tageszeitung*, 2 January 1995)

‘Prague, Warsaw and Budapest belong in the heart of Europe’, he said.

(14) Die Überraschung der Ära nach dem Kalten Krieg ist nicht das altmodische Blutvergießen auf dem Balkan und im Kaukasus, am Rande Europas, sondern die Ausweitung der neuen Zone von Sicherheit und Wohlstand im Herzen Europas bis hin zum unbeständigen Osten. (*Die Zeit*, 7 January 1999)

What is surprising about the post-Cold War era is not the atavistic bloodshed in the Balkans and the Caucasus region, on Europe’s periphery, but the extension of the new zone of security and prosperity in the heart of Europe reaching into the unstable East.

(15) Enlargement has not been a zero-sum game in which more security for some is bought at the price of less security for others. All have benefited from NATO’s greater presence at the very heart of Europe. A successful first round of enlargement will also create the best conditions for other rounds in the future. (...) Some may see the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland mainly as a righting of historical wrongs, as the final step in overcoming the division of Europe which followed the Yalta agreement in 1945 and Stalin’s imposition of an iron curtain in the heart of Europe. Yet such a view would miss the real significance of enlargement (...). (*The Economist*, 13 March 1999)

In these examples, the status of being part of *the heart of Europe* and the position of being *in the heart of Europe*, are treated as historical qualities – in examples (12) and (13), the Neiß-Silesia region, as well as Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary (metonymically represented by their capital cities) are reclaimed for *Europe’s heart*, on account of an implied argument that they belong there by right of historical and cultural CENTRALITY to the entity of ‘Europe’. Examples (14) and (15) explicate the conditions for the well-being of the newly reconstituted HEART OF EUROPE: security, prosperity and NATO’s presence. *Being at or in the heart of Europe* is thus perceived as more than mere geographic centrality; rather, it is a cultural, political (and economic) privilege. This privilege may be considered as not yet being held by all European States, or it may even be considered as unfair (cf. example 11) but that does not reduce its value in principle.

In terms of stereotypes and folk beliefs that are associated with the source concept HEART, such usage ties in with the metonymy/metaphor of the HEART as an OBJECT OF VALUE, which is evident in idioms such as *to win someone’s heart* (cf. Niemeier, 2000: 207–209). In terms of the target topic, the HEART OF EUROPE metaphor refers to places and nations that are considered to be not just geographically central but also culturally, historically and emotionally essential to the identity of Europe. The enlargement of the EU is thus presented as an enlargement of *Europe’s heart* or as the return of Eastern European nations into it. However, if Eastern Europe and the Balkans can be part of *Europe’s heart* and even Denmark can exert a *pull* on that *heart*, what about Britain? Has it got no connection with *in the heart of Europe* at all?

## Britain at the Heart of Europe

The picture of Britain's relationship to the *heart of Europe* does not look quite that bleak if we shift our search from the phrase *in the heart* to *at the heart of Europe*. Out of the 209 tokens in the British sample of EUROMETA II, 89 (42%) mention or thematise the phrase of *Britain being or working at the heart of Europe*. The earliest use recorded in the sample is a statement made by the Conservative British Prime Minister, John Major, in a speech that he gave in Germany in March 1991, four months after he had succeeded Margaret Thatcher as British Prime Minister and Tory leader:

(16) John Major last night signalled a decisive break with the Thatcherite era, pledging to a delighted German audience that Britain would work 'at the very heart of Europe' with its partners in forging an integrated European community. (*The Guardian*, 12 March 1991)

Over the following months, Major's *heart of Europe* slogan was repeated and commented on, both in Britain and Germany. For a while, most interpretations were consistent with Major's own use of the metaphor, i.e. they treated the concept of WORKING AT THE HEART OF A POLITICAL ENTITY as equivalent to the positively valued notion of BEING CLOSELY INVOLVED OR ENGAGED WITH IT. By 1994, the joint parliamentary groups of the ruling Christian Democrat parties in Germany even used the reference to Major's statement in a manifesto to express their hope that 'Britain should play its role at the heart – i.e. at the core – of Europe' (cf. CDU/CSU 1994: '(die Hoffnung (...), daß Großbritannien seine Rolle "im Herzen Europas" (...) übernimmt'). The German parties' statement was widely commented on in the British press (for analyses cf. Reeves, 1996; Schäffner, 1996). *The Guardian* (3 September 1994) for instance interpreted it as 'by far the most important recognition by a political body indisputably – as opposed to rhetorically – at the heart of Europe that the Maastricht project will now be rethought'. The implicit condemnation of the Major government as being 'only rhetorically at the heart of Europe' signalled an important change in the political evaluation of Major's 1991 statement. In view of the increasingly Euro-sceptical stance of his government, the promise that *Britain would work at the heart of Europe* was seen as hollow:

(17) Mr Major seems not to recall that his original project was to place Britain 'at the heart of Europe'. His eyes are increasingly fixed on another event that must, more or less, coincide with the IGC [= Inter-Governmental Conference of the EU] – namely, the next British general election. (*The Economist*, 4 February 1995)

(18) We seek a place at the heart of Europe; unless, when we get there, we don't like what we find. (*The Guardian*, 6 February 1995)

(19) John Major did not help matters by (...) arrogantly likening his EU partners to lemmings tumbling off a cliff. Did that really sound like a leader determined to place Britain at the heart of Europe, as he promised at the start of his premiership? (*The Independent*, 18 December 1995)

In addition, more provocative challenges to the Major's promise appeared, in which the initially optimistic-sounding phrase of *Britain at the heart of Europe* was adapted to fit into pessimistic scenarios or warnings of HEART FAILURE OR HEART DISEASE:

(20) John Major said in Bonn in March 1991, that he wanted to put Britain 'where we belong, at the very heart of Europe'. (...) Neither Mr Major nor, increasingly, others in Europe, have been speaking in quite this way for the past three years. (...) An editorial in the *Independent* earlier this year suggested that if Mr Major wanted to be at the heart of Europe, it was, presumably, as a blood clot. (*The Independent*, 11 September 1994)

(21) Sir Edward Heath, the former prime minister, said that the non-cooperation policy had achieved nothing. 'The Prime Minister was right when he said Britain must be at the heart of Europe. But you can't be at the heart of Europe if you spend your time blocking its arteries,' he said. (*The Daily Telegraph*, 21 June 1996)

(22) Mr Lamont was strongly critical of the power assumed by Brussels (...). To thunderous applause, he said: 'There is no point at being at the heart of Europe if the heart is diseased.' (*The Guardian*, 10 October 1996)

As the latter examples show, the HEART FAILURE scenario could be used both by Euro-philés and sceptics. Whereas Edward Heath, who took Britain into what was then the 'European Economic Community' maintained that it was desirable for Britain to be *at the heart of Europe* but warned the government of the day might be endangering the life of that very *heart* by *blocking its arteries* (example 21), the former Tory chancellor of the exchequer who had presided over Black Wednesday, Norman Lamont, considered *Europe's heart* to be *diseased* already (example 22). Another negatively slanted HEART PROBLEM scenario had come to prominence a year earlier when a former EU-official, Bernard Connolly, had published a book under the title *The Rotten Heart of Europe*, which quickly captured headlines in the British press (cf. e.g. *The Economist*, 9 September 1995; *The Guardian*, 11 September 1995). This scenario version constitutes a special conceptual 'blending' (Turner & Fauconnier, 2003), insofar as a well established mapping ENTITIES THAT ARE DETERIORATING ARE ROTTEN OR ROTTING ORGANISMS, is applied to the concept of HEART in its metaphorical meanings of CENTRE and CHIEF ORGAN of the EU. It thus conveys a sense of a particularly dangerous type of deterioration, which is hard to *heal*, if at all.

The slogan of *Britain at the heart of Europe* – as well as its integration into ROTTEN HEART OR HEART ILLNESS scenarios – even survived the change of government from the Conservatives to Labour in 1997. Thus, the above-mentioned metaphor of *blocked arteries* and *a rotten heart* were used again to refer to Britain's Euro-policies:

(23) If Britain carries on laying down the law (...) while maintaining its opt-out, other EU regulars may get cheesed off. Britain may be advised that it can't be at the heart of Europe if it is detached from its arteries. (*The Guardian*, 10 June 1997)

(24) So, what is the message for Tony Blair? (...) he must recognise that changes in personnel will not be enough to stop the rot at the heart of the EU. (*Daily Mail*, 17 March 1999)

(25) After a long period of cautious equivocation, the prime minister had, in his own words, 'shifted up a gear' in his ambition to lodge Britain at its rightful place in the heart of Europe. And then, abruptly, the heart of Europe got sick. (*The Economist*, 20 March 1999)

(26) Having heard our press and politicians pour scorn and disdain on them for generations, the Europeans are exacting their revenge. They are seeing Britain as Europe's sick man, a charity case which needs their help. When the time finally comes for Tony Blair to make good his promise to be 'at the heart of Europe', he may find the dynamic has changed. Far from welcoming him as a young, energetic saviour, the neighbours might offer him a look of pity and a cup of sweetened tea – but only after he has wiped his feet in a trough of disinfectant. (*The Guardian*, 4 April 2001)

Labour's commitment to being *at the heart of Europe* has thus been turned around by way of using DISEASE imagery in similar ways as happened to Major's promise. Either the British government's commitment to *be at the heart* is put in question (cf. example 23), or the *heart* itself is seen as *rotten* or *sick* on account of the nepotism scandal that forced the EU Commission to resign in 1999 (cf. examples 24 and 25), or the EU is pictured as not wishing Britain to be *close to its heart* because of its HEALTH PROBLEMS, as in the example (26), which alludes to the then topical 'foot-and-mouth' epidemic in Britain. However, it is not the 'real' epidemic that is seen as the origin of Britain's problematic relationship with Europe but the scorn or disdain allegedly 'poured' on the EU by British Euro-sceptics, which give the lie to the *Britain at the heart of Europe* slogan. Conceptually, the notions of HEART OF EUROPE and FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE have little in common apart from including elements from the semantic field of BODY/ORGANISM. The allusion to the real FOOT-AND-MOUTH disease is superimposed onto the metaphorical HEART concept so as to produce a semantic blend that provides its own ironical commentary. This mechanism also operates in some of the (altogether few) instances of metaphors involving other BODY PART source concepts in the British corpus: in each case, the reference to the *Britain at the heart of Europe* formula acts as a trigger for a sarcastic commentary:

(27) These are just a handful of the issues which echo around Brussels' conference and dinner tables. There are many more in a similar vein – and one thing binds them together. They bear no relationship to the British 'debate', hearts, livers, gall bladders and all. (*The Guardian*, 1 December 1997)

(28) The contempt with which the French government treats Britain is beyond belief. Tony Blair says he wants Britain to be at the heart of Europe. Well it looks this morning as if Europe is showing us its backside. (*The Sun*, 3 September 2001)

Britain's public debate over its presence at or absence from *the heart of Europe* is still ongoing. Thus, in spring 2003, *The Guardian* characterised renewed speculation about a 'two tier Europe' as 'worryingly reminiscent' of a previous proposal to build an EU 'avant-garde' – worrying, that is, for a Labour government, 'which had vowed to put Britain "at the heart of Europe"' (*The Guardian*, 12 March 2003). When we look at the presuppositions implied in the *Britain at the heart of Europe* slogan, it soon becomes evident Britain's position is seen as being actually *distanced* from that *heart*. British Euro-philes demand that this gap be narrowed in the future, but the predominant view, as articulated in most press comments is that the gap is widening, i.e. that the promise of *placing Britain at or closer to the heart of Europe* is in danger of not being fulfilled or, when argued from a Euro-sceptical viewpoint, that it *cannot* be fulfilled or is even altogether pointless. Such a debate seems to be completely absent from the mainstream German public discourse on Europe, as recorded in the EUROMETA corpora. There are just two 'genuine' tokens of the DISEASED HEART scenario in the German sample: a reference to a row between France and Germany as the 'faulty cardiac valve behind the fainting fit' (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 16 June 1997: 'die eigentliche Krankheit (...) – den Herzklappenfehler hinter dem Schwächeanfall') and a quotation from an allegation by an extremist right wing party that 'Germany, as the heart of Europe, is ill due to its humiliation after World War II' (*die tageszeitung*, 12 January 1990: 'die "Verbiegung des Charakters des deutschen Volkes" (...) – Wenn das Herz Europas krank ist, kann Europa nicht gesund'). The remainder are neutral or positive, and a substantial subsection, i.e. 25 tokens, is made up of politically largely noncommittal reports about the British *heart-of-Europe* debate. We can thus discern a pronounced contrast between the British and the German debates: whereas most of the German press see their own country as close to or even containing *the heart of Europe* and applaud this state of affairs, the British public predominantly do not see themselves as being anywhere *close to the heart of Europe*, and to a large extent they doubt whether it is such a good *place to be* at all. Even Euro-friendly politicians and media see the narrowing of this political gap between Britain and the *heart of Europe* as a glimmer of hope for the future, not as something to be achieved in the short term.

## Conclusions

These findings have a number of important methodological and theoretical implications for research on discourse studies focusing on the Europe debates. In the first place, they can be related to social and political science research on international and intercultural perception patterns, attitudes and strategies of stereotyping. Political and sociological analyses have amply demonstrated that public attitudes towards Europe in Britain and Germany, as well as perceptions of one's own nation's status in it differ strongly (Ash, 2001; Baker & Seawright, 1998; Grosser, 1998; Musolff *et al.*, 2001; Young, 1998). The comparison of British and German uses of the HEART OF EUROPE concept reflect these deep-seated differences in political attitude and perception

patterns, even though they may be glossed over in official diplomatic statements and in administrative Euro-jargon.

Furthermore, the ubiquity and conceptual range of HEART metaphors provide empirical evidence of the 'survival' of aspects of the BODY POLITIC concepts in European political thinking. Towards the end of his 1971 study, David Hale contended that 'the idea of a body politic had lost most of its validity' by the mid-17th century and that later applications of the BODY-STATE analogy 'were brief, unoriginal, and void of any implications rising from the analogy' (Hale, 1971: 130). When looking at general idioms and traditional lexicalisations from that domain (*head of government*, *head of state*, *organ of the working class*, *military arm of the party*), this hypothesis may appear to be confirmed. However, the range of conceptual variation as well as the apparent emotive and political intensity of debates about the geopolitical status of being IN or at THE HEART OF EUROPE, which we noted in both the British and German debates, demonstrated the undiminished significance of at least one part of the ancient body politic concept system. In the light of these data, Hale's assessment requires further investigation and probably revision.

Furthermore, the evidence for the HEART concept in EUROMETA II suggests that metaphors in public discourse typically appear in specific scenarios that may be characteristic for a discourse community, such as the British or the German public. Thus the positive claims about the own nation being *at/in the heart of Europe* mark out the German sample clearly from the British debate, which has no equivalents. Rather, the attempts by successive governments to highlight a need for closer British involvement with the EU by promoting the slogan of Britain *being/working at the heart of Europe* suffered the fate of being denounced and ridiculed by way of recontextualising the slogan in DISEASE/ILLNESS scenarios. On the other hand, HEART metaphors also account for shared views of political crises or problems (e.g. the civil war in former Yugoslavia or issues related to the enlargement process) that are given special status in both British and German discourse by way of locating them *in the heart of Europe*. These main scenarios account for most of the tokens of metaphorical concepts as well as for the cognitively and textually most elaborate variations, and in the course of the public debate they build up to microtraditions of metaphor-based political argument. These emerging traditions culminate in 'conceptual contests', in which no major participant in the public debate can afford to remain silent; hence a sudden 'inflation' of tokens for specific scenarios in the corpus at particular points in the discourse history of that community. Some of these contests become so prominent that they are reported in a neighbouring discourse community, without, however, necessarily being 'carried over' into that community's public debate. By focusing on such traditions of use and their turning points, corpus-based metaphor analysis can highlight and compare the argumentative tendencies and assumptions that are associated with specific discourse communities. A comparison similar to this one but including data for other EU member and candidate countries would probably expose further structural patterns in the auto- and hetero-perception of nations' relationships to the *heart of Europe*. We could thus construct an empirically founded history of intra- and international debates about the political structure of Europe that might conceivably develop into a truly

internationalised or intercultural discourse (if not consensus) about key concepts of pan-European politics. It would be fascinating to find out since when, and how the BODY POLITIC concept has been applied to a whole set of nations, such as the EU, rather than to one specific nation. Could the idea that Europe forms a *body politic* with a *beating heart* in it be the basis of a shared European political consciousness?

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